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ABSTRACT

The new standards issued by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) indicate that teacher training must now reflect a broad commitment to multicultural education. Other educational organizations have expressed similar concerns. The focus in multicultural teacher education is on helping teachers to function effectively with all pupils in a culturally diverse society. The fundamental assumption is that teachers can improve their teaching of school subjects to their own or other cultural groups if they possess the appropriate attitudes, cultural experiences, and self-understanding. Educational institutions must begin to assume responsibility for seeing that teacher education programs reflect the cultural and ethnic pluralism in this nation through their models, practices, staffing, materials, and resources. (EB)

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ACCREDITATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION: A MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

During this century, perhaps no concept has given educators more difficulty than that of EQUALITY. As teachers and administrators, we have gradually come to realize the inequities that have existed in our educational system for so long. Segregated schools invariably penalized Asians, Blacks, Native Americans and the Spanish speaking. Although boys and girls attend school together, too frequently we educate them by traditional images of male and female roles. We are still far from genuine educational equality. Our human responses to human problems seem to function much like a pendulum. Where once we educated only the few and ignored the many, we now attempt to educate the many, but from a single perspective. By doing so we mistake uniformity for equality.

In May of 1977, the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NSATE), issued new standards for the accreditation of teacher education programs for its member colleges and universities, that went into effect January 1, 1979. One of the most striking features of these new standards is one that is likely to have a significant impact on the training teachers will receive from now one. This new development is a rather sweeping commitment to multicultural education.

Before examining what implications this new concept may have, it seems sensible to ask about the meaning of what multicultural education is.. For many educators, it is an unfamiliar term or a term that may carry the wrong implications.

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Multicultural education, and other commonly used terms, e.g., ethnic studies, minority studies, cultural pluralism, refer to separate and distinct concepts. Nonetheless they are sometimes mistakenly used interchangeably. Also, there is no generally accepted definition for the concept of multicultural education. Therefore, it is necessary to offer some insights into multicultural education through position statements of educational organizations, as well as viewpoints from various educators, to give us a better understanding of the term and what implications this new concept has on teacher education today.

The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), interprets multicultural education as a humanistic concept based on the strength of diversity, human rights, social justice and alternative life choices for all people. Multicultural Education should include curricular, instructional, administrative, and environmental efforts to help all students avail themselves of as many models, alternatives and opportunities as possible from the full spectrum of our cultures. Multicultural education is a continuous, systematic process that will broaden and diversify as it develops. Multicultural education supports the view of a pluralistic society as a positive force that welcomes differences as vehicles for understanding. ASCD believes multicultural education goes beyond an understanding and acceptance of difference cultures. Multicultural education supports the right of different cultures to exist, as separate and distinct entities, and acknowledges their contribution to society.(2)

The Commission on Multicultural Education of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (1973 - "No One Model American"), offers some additional dimensions to the definition of multicultural education:

> Multicultural education is education which values cultural pluralism. Multicultural education rejects the view that schools should merely tolerate cultural pluralism...multicultural eudcation recognizes that this cultural diversity is a valuable resource that should be preserved and extended.(3)

The new NCATE standards include a working definition of the term, but it is a very broad and loosely defined concept. It reads in part:

> Multicultural education is preparation for the social, political, and economic realities that individuals experience in culturally diverse and complex human encounters.... This preparation provides a process by which an individual develops competencies for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and behaving in differential cultural settings. (4)

In short, multicultural education seems to be either or both: (1) sets of courses and skills involved in coping successfully with culturally diverse society; and (2) a general approach to education which seeks to organize schooling around both the fact and the value of "cultural pluralism."(5)

BUT WHY A MULTICULTURAL APPROACH TO TEACHING?

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), prepared an extensive position statement on multicultural education. Their task force developed three major factors that make multicultural education a necessity: (1) ethnic pluralism is a societal reality that influences the lives of young people; (2) in one way or another, individuals do acquire knowledge or beliefs, sometimes invalid, about ethnic groups and ethnicity; (3) beliefs and knowledge

about ethnic groups limit the perspectives of many and make a difference, often a negative difference, in the opportunities and options of members of ethnic groups.

Because ethnicity is important in the lives of many Americans it is important that all members of our society develop "ethnic literacy," a solidly based understanding of ethnicity and ethnic groups. Schools cannot afford to ignore their responsibility to contribute to the development of ethnic literacy and understanding. Only a well-conceived, sensitive, thorough, and continuous program of multicultural education can create the broadly based ethnic literacy so necessary for the future of our nation and world security. (6)

Just as NCATE's interest in multicultural education is supported by a particular view of democracy, so it is also underlain by a particular view of what it means to be an educated person. It is a view which is beginning to see a resurgence of popularity at leading American education institutions. Dean Henry Rosovsky of Harvard, who was recently instrumental in reorganizing that school's general education requirement, put this view clearly:

> ....an educated American, in the last third of this century, cannot be provincial in the sense of being ignorant of other cultures and other times. It is no longer possible to conduct our lives without reference to the wider world, or the historical forces that have shaped the present and will shape the future. Perhaps few educated people will ever possess a sufficiently broad perspective. But it seems clear to me that a crucial difference between the educated and the uneducated is the extent to which one's life experience is viewed in wider contexts. (7)

In NCATE's view, where there is cultural diversity, teachers must be knowledgeable and sensitive of the diversity in order to make their teaching work and their students better able to understand. However, in the classroom that has no cultural diversity present, it is as equally important for the teacher to be able to make his/her students understand, that their lives are not lived in isolation, and that there are other perspectives than their own. (8)

THE NEW NCATE STANDARDS ON MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

NCATE standards cover six areas of teacher education programs; Governance, Curricula, Faculty, Students, Resources and Facilities, and Evaluation Program Review Planning. The new NCATE standards include a separate standard (2.1.1) on multicultural education, but the subject is also mentioned throughout the undergraduate and the graduate standards, emphasizing NCATE's insistence that multicultural education pervade the teacher training curriculum.

Standard 1. Governance of Basic Programs. Places experience in the commitment to teaching for a multiculural society on a par with public school teaching experience as an important characteristic of faculty and staff.

Standard 2. Curricula for Basic Programs. Includes the condition that every teacher education curriculum should include study of the value systems of various societal groups. Standard 2.1.1., Multicultural Education, says that this must be done in both the general and professional components of the curriculum. This standard stipulates that the curriculum must stress skills and not just propositional knowledge about various cultures. Students should learn how to teach in various cultural settings.

"Multicultural education could include but not be limited to experiences which: (1) Promote analytical and evaluative abilities to confront issues such as participatory democracy, racism, sexism, and the parity of power; (2) Develop skills for values clarification including the study of the manifest and latent transmission of values; (3) Examine the dynamics of diverse cultures and the implications for developing teaching strategies; and (4) Examine linguistic variations and diverse learning styles as a basis for the development of appropriate teaching strategies." (9)

Standard 3. (3.1) Competence and Utilization of Faculty. There now needs to be a hiring policy of schools to recruit new faculty of ethnically diverse backgrounds, as well as faculty committed to multicultural education. In 3.4 on Faculty Development, the standards urge "developing and implementing innovations in multicultural education." Standard 3.5, "Part-Time Faculty" suggests or perhaps implies that part-timers be of varied cultural background.

Standard 4. Students. Policies should be designed to encourage the development of a culturally diverse student body. In 4.3 - Counseling and Advising, counselors are to be aware of cultural concerns among students and in the society at large.

Standard 5. Resources. 5.1 - library acquisitions are to "reflect a commitment to multicultural education." 5.2 - Materials and Instructional Media Center, the library is to have instructional media and materials that "reflect cultural diversity in American society."

Standard 6. Evaluation. 6.3 - Long Range Planning includes the condition that such planning must "reflect a commitment to multicultural education."

In summary, it appears that, for NCATE colleges and universities, teacher training must now reflect a broad commitment to multicultural education. That commitment is far more than merely offering courses in multicultural education, it literally involves every aspect of the teacher education program. It remains unclear how most institutions will try to meet these standards and to what degree their commitment to this new concept will be.

TRAINING TEACHERS FOR A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY

Hilliard defines "Multicultural Teacher Education," as the focus in teacher education which is designed to help teachers to function effectively with all pupils in a culturally diverse society. The focus is upon teaching behavior that facilitates or retards pupil growth. This does not refer to teacher education exclusively for working with a single cultural group, either by a member of the single group or by a person external to the group. The fundamental assumption is that all teachers can improve their teaching of school subjects to their own or other cultural groups if the appropriate attitudes, cultural experiences, and self-understanding are in the teacher. (10)

What are some of the objectives, understandings, skills and attitudes essential for teacher effectiveness? What are some of the factors that faculty in teacher education programs need to be aware of and committed to in implementing a multicultural approach to teaching?

Educating teachers to perform successfully in a multicultural society is truly a professional challenge. The implementation of a functional multicultural teacher education program is one of the most demanding single obligations in teacher education today. It is clear that all prospective teachers must become aware of the cultural pluralism of American society. It is equally clear that public education must provide an opportunity for all pupils to prepare themselves to live effectively in such a society. A sound multicultural teacher education program will enable teachers to:

a. Understand their own and their pupils' environment and culture.

b. Understand their own and their pupils' anxieties, insecurities, attitudes and prejudices.

c. Develop teaching skills consistent with the accepted purposes of education for a multicultural society. (11)

Teacher training programs must prepare all prospective teachers to design and implement a curriculum that is multicultural. Banks(12) believes that if teacher education programs are to prepare pre- and in-service teachers to function successfully within multicultural classrooms, they must help all teachers acquire:

a. more democratic attitudes and values

b. a clarified philosophical position related to pluralism

c. a process of conceptualization of ethnic studies

d. the ability to view society from diverse ethnic perspectives, and

e. knowledge of the emerging stages of ethnicity and their curricular and teaching implications.

In a less abstract vein Hilliard provides practical recommendations for the preparation of teachers who can function successfully in a culturally heterogeneous society. He lists the following understandings, skills and attitudes as essential for teacher effectiveness:

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS:

a. The teaching process is always a cross-cultural encounter.

b. The personality, values and social background of the teacher are critical cultural inputs.

c. All teaching tools are culture bound.

d. The classroom is not a benign context but a potent matrix.

e. Teachers must understand how the student can be a victim.

f. Teachers must understand that all minds are equally complex.

g. Teachers must be helped to understand that the poor and racial or ethnic minorities can and actually have been able to learn at the same level as others when the proper environmental support was provided.

h. Teachers must understand that learning is related to a sense of power over some of the forces which impinge upon our lives.

i. Teachers must understand how their own expectations are determining factors in building a climate for growth of students.

j. Teachers must intimately understand the culture of their students.

ESSENTIAL SKILLS:

a. The ability to communicate with students from other cultures.

b. Diagnosing the knowledge and abilities of students from other cultures

c. Skill in the evaluation of professional literature bearing upon multicultural problems.

d. Self-diagnosis

e. Recognizing cultural equivalencies.

f. Detecting conscious and unconscious negative signals.

ESSENTIAL ATTITUDES:

a. Teachers must be as free of bias as possible and must be open to continuing self-examination.

b. Teachers must honor and value cultural alternatives such as language, beliefs, values, and behaviors.

c. Teachers must feel that a multicultural orientation is beneficial to them personally.(13)

The recommendations of Banks and Hilliard seem to represent a comprehensive listing of competencies essential to the preparation of effective teachers for a multicultural society. Implementation of a program to accomodate these competencies will require significant changes in the academic content and experiences provided for all prospective teachers. These changes will affect all facets of the college program and will require the cooperation of a large segment of the academic community. Internally, the faculty of each institution must become aware, sensitive and committed to the concept of multicultural education. Anything less than a concentrated, committed and cooperative effort will result in mere tinkering with the teacher education program.

The need for a concentrated effort to prepare all prospective teachers to teach in a multicultural approach is crucial. It should be emphasized that from this writer's perspective two additional viewpoints on multicultural education must be stressed. One, that multicultural education is not a catchword for "minority" but encompasses all people in the United States, their racial and ethnic differences, their customs, their levels of income, their traditions and beliefs, their languages and their religious beliefs. Secondly, that all teacher education institutions, regardless of their membership with NCATE, should come to realize that we can no longer afford

to graduate students that have little or no awareness, sensitivity, understanding and commitment to the concept of multicultural education. Educational institutions must approach education with a multicultural perspective because they realize and value the concept as the "right thing to do", instead of viewing multicultural education as "something we have to do". Educational institutions must begin to assume responsibility for seeing that teacher education programs reflect the cultural and ethnic pluralism of this nation through their staffing, materials, methods, strategies, resources and participatory models and practices.

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